



## State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
PO Box 500  
TRENTON, NJ 08625-0500

RICHARD J. CODEY  
*Acting Governor*

WILLIAM L. LIBRERA  
*Commissioner*

July 26, 2005

TO: Chief School Administrators  
Charter School Lead Persons

FROM: William L. Librera, Ed.D.  
Commissioner

SUBJECT: No Child Left Behind Requirements for Paraprofessionals

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 requires that all paraprofessionals hired before January 8, 2002 meet the requirements for being highly qualified, no later than January 8, 2006. Recently the United States Department of Education (USDOE) issued a statement aligning the deadline for compliance with the requirements for paraprofessionals with that which is required for highly qualified teachers. This statement aligns the monitoring and enforcement efforts of the USDOE for states for highly qualified teachers and paraprofessionals. Therefore, USDOE will monitor compliance of states and districts to the paraprofessional and highly qualified teacher requirements at the end of the 2005-2006 school year.

The NCLB mandated requirements are that each district and school receiving Title I funds must ensure that all paraprofessionals hired after January 8, 2002 who work in a program that is supported in whole or part with Title I funds, meet one of the following requirements:

1. Complete at least two years of study at an institution of higher learning; or
2. Obtain an associate's degree (or higher); or
3. Meet a rigorous standard of quality and demonstrate, through a formal state or local academic assessment:
  - a. Knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing and mathematics; or
  - b. Knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing reading readiness, writing readiness and mathematics readiness, as appropriate.

The only exceptions to these requirements are for paraprofessionals where 100% of their work responsibilities are in conducting one or more of the following activities:

- parental involvement;
- translation;
- personal care services to a student with disabilities; or
- clerical and/or administrative work.

As you are aware, the department has consistently encouraged diverse options towards meeting these requirements. These options are attached for your information and use, and include a test created by the Educational Testing Service (ETS) and a district performance/portfolio assessment. Many districts have utilized the ETS paraprofessional test and the paraprofessionals have experienced a high degree of success when coupled with preparatory sessions. The district performance/portfolio assessment, developed through collaborative efforts of the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE), New Jersey Education Association, New Jersey Principals and Supervisors Association and New Jersey Association of School Administrators, for currently employed paraprofessionals, is a year long process which integrates “on-the-job” skills and knowledge with academic study. As a result of this recent announcement from USDOE, there is still time to use these two options. Therefore, please share this information with those affected paraprofessionals.

Adherence to these requirements will be monitored by USDOE and lack of compliance will have a significant impact on students, individual paraprofessionals in positions supported by Title I funds and the schools in your district operating Title I programs. The USDOE does not grant states or districts waivers or exceptions to these requirements. Therefore, any district that hired paraprofessionals after January 8, 2002, without having met the appropriate requirements, or districts with paraprofessionals hired prior to January 8, 2002, that have not met the appropriate requirements by January 8, 2006 will, upon monitoring, be considered non-compliant with the NCLB federal legislation, and must immediately take corrective action. The corrective action for those hired after January 8, 2002, employed as paraprofessionals in Title I schoolwide programs, must be reassigned to any of the aforementioned exempt activities. In addition, districts with paraprofessionals employed in Title I targeted assistance schools must use state and/or local funds to pay the portion or entire salary of those individuals.

Chief School Administrators  
Charter School Lead Persons  
Page 3  
July 26, 2005

Paraprofessionals hired prior to January 8, 2002 in Title I supported programs that have not yet met the requirements, still have time to satisfy the requirements through meeting a rigorous standard of quality and to demonstrate knowledge in the required areas through a formal paraprofessional assessment, or the local performance portfolio assessment.

Additional information on the paraprofessional requirements, exemptions and the performance/portfolio assessments can be found on the following NJDOE websites:

<http://www.nj.gov/njed/title1/hqs/>  
<http://www.state.nj.us/njded/title1/hqs/pp/protfolio.shtml>.

It is the department's mission to support districts and schools in assisting their personnel to meet these requirements and to ensure the continuum of services afforded to students is maintained. As you progress with the implementation of NCLB, the department offers its continued support to increase student achievement. We encourage you to communicate this information to your paraprofessionals and assist them in meeting the identified requirements of the federal legislation. If you need assistance, please contact your County Superintendent, Abbott Division, or the Office of Title I Program Planning and Accountability.

WLL/JMR/DS/G:NCLB\NCLB Guidance\paraprofessionals\paraprofessional 071105.doc

Attachment

c: Richard Rosenberg  
J. Michael Rush  
Assistant Commissioners  
Annette Castiglione  
Suzanne Ochse  
Diane Schonyers  
County Superintendents  
NJ LEE Group Members  
NJ Garden State Coalition